



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
-----------------	-------------	----------------------	---------------------	------------------

10/573,642

08/20/2008

Guy Gentet

12928/10027

8964

23280 7590 10/07/2009  
Davidson, Davidson & Kappel, LLC  
485 7th Avenue  
14th Floor  
New York, NY 10018

EXAMINER

BOYD, ERIN M

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3663

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

10/07/2009

PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

***Response to Arguments***

1. Applicant's arguments filed 9/10/2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.
2. Applicant argues on page 6; paragraph 1 that Gallacher fails to teach that the spacer grids are secured to the guide tubes, as recited in Claim 1. Applicant submits a number of definitions for the term "secure" and asserts that "secured" means "fastened" or "firmly fixed". Applicant argues that Gallacher fails to teach the disputed limitation because sliding is permitted between the fuel rods and the spacer grids. Gallacher discloses "springs incorporated in the spacer grids are most frequently used to permit some sliding of the fuel rods with respect to the spacer grids. In some designs, the spacer grid is free to move axially a small amount to accommodate minor changes in the axial length of the fuel rods during irradiation" (column 1, lines 46-53).

Examiner notes that while term "secured" is defined as "to fasten", the term "fasten" is defined as "to join" or "to connect". It is clear that the fuel rod is connected / joined to the spacer grid even though a limited amount of sliding between them is permitted. In fact, the spacer grid and fuel rods in the fuel assembly cannot be disconnected from each other by said limited sliding alone. Disassembly of the fuel assembly would be necessary to separate the fuel rods from the spacer grid.

Objects may be secured to each other although a small, limited amount of movement between them is permitted.

Art Unit: 3663

3. In view of the above, the finality of the previous office action is maintained.

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Erin M. Boyd whose telephone number is (571) 270-5378. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 9:00-6:00 EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jack Keith can be reached on (571) 272-6878. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/E. M. B./  
Examiner, Art Unit 3663

/Rick Palabrica/  
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3663